On the line 10¢

Volume 4 Number 6 Tuesday, June 4, 1974

Support the MTD workers strike for cost-of-living

About 250 workers at the three plants of Modern Tool and Die Products of Canada (MTD) in Kitchener, Ontario began a wildcat strike on May 24 to back their demand for a cost-of-living increase in their wages. The last wage increase which the workers received was in September, 1973 and most of the workers received only 22 cents increase at that time. It is clear to the workers at MTD that the 22 cent raise last September has been more than completely eaten up by the high rate of inflation in the capitalist economy. They are in a much worse financial situation than last September and are forced to take action to defend their wages.

The MTD capitalists are trying to force the workers to accept these conditions of deteriorating wages by claiming that the strike of the workers is "illegal". The capitalist newspaper in Kitchener, the **Kitchener-Waterloo Record**, has assisted the MTD capitalists by printing two articles about the "illegal" strike and distorting everything else about the situation. The MTD capitalists have also sent a threatening letter directly to the employees, thereby going over the head of the union representing the workers, the United Auto Workers, and trying to create divisions among the workers instead of dealing with the just demands of all the workers for a decent wage. This letter, sent by the MTD capitalists under the hoax of "clarifying the issue", contains threats of legal action against the workers, threats that their jobs will be lost if they don't return to work immediately and threats that the workers will lose hospital, health and life insurance coverage as well as vacation and holiday pay if they don't return to work.

The workers are not frightened by these threats of the MTD capitalists. It is quite evident that the most serious threat is that the capitalists will lose some profits if they don't meet the workers just demands and get them back to work. MTD is owned by the Modern Tool and Die Company in Cleveland, Ohio and this is yet another situation where the U.S. Imperialists are trying to undermine the wages of Canadian workers in order to reap maximum profits for themselves. The main products of the company are lawnmowers, garden tractors, snowblowers and parts for the auto industry and this is a particularly busy time of the year for their main lines of products. One worker said he tried to order a lawnmower for himself through the company and was told it would take at least two months before he would get it because there were so many orders. The workers know that this situation of heavy production provides them with an excellent opportunity to get better wages.

The workers, many of whom are immigrants from Portugal, Italy, and Greece are not frightened by the cries of

see **MTD** page 14

Editorial

Practical agreements to organize the unorganized

It is in the interests of the monopoly capitalist class to keep workers divided from each other and competing among themselves. The more divided and competitive the workers are the easier it is for the monopoly capitalists to exploit them to the maximum. The more time and energy the workers use up fighting among themselves the less time and energy they will have to resist the attacks of the monopoly capitalist class.

Workers organize themselves into trade unions in order to present a united front to the monopoly capitalists and in order to cut down competitiion amongst themselves. The more united the workers become in their resistance to capitalist exploitation the stronger is their resistance and the more successful is their fight to gain higher wages, better working conditions and job security. It is in the interests of the workers to build the strongest, most resolute and unified front in opposition to the exploitation of the monopoly capitalists, especially in this time of economic crisis in the capitalist world. This fact is being grasped by a growing number of workers—organized and unorganized alike.

The fact that strength and fighting ability are based on unity is not merely some observation from a particular situation or a particular struggle. Rather it is a **principle** which applies to the whole working class movement in its struggle with the monopoly capitalists. This principle must be grasped firmly in order to advance in every particular situation whether that be an organizing drive, on a picket line, on a bargaining committee or anywhere else.

When the working class stands face to face with the monopoly capitalists in the constant struggle between the two classes, every aspect of the unity in the workers ranks is tested. It is of crucial importance in this struggle that the trade unions be organized so that maximum unity and therefore maximum strength and fighting ability are concentrated against the monopoly capitalists. Any sign of disunity is a point for attack by the monopoly capitalists who know that disunity means weakness in the organization of the workers.

We have stressed the fact in **On The Line** that the main source of weakness for the trade union movement today is the unorganized workers. In Canada, more than 70 per cent of the workers are unorganized. This vast pool of disunity is a constant source of attack by the monopoly capitalists, both in the sense that the unorganized workers are the most exploited section of workers and in the sense that the monopoly capitalists use the unorganized workers to attack and undermine the struggles of the organized workers. It is definitely in the interest of the organized workers to help organize the unorganized workers and build unity in the trade union movement to an even higher level by taking up this work in a serious manner.

This fact is also being grasped by a larger and larger number of activists in the trade union movement. Militants, activists and leftists who are taking up the work of organizing, are breaking through roadblocks and barriers which exist in the form of narrow sectional allegiances and inter-union rivalries within the trade union movement. That is, the call is beginning to emerge for **practical agreements** among militants to carry out the practical work **to organize the unorganized.** What this means is that an increasing number of trade unionists across the country are becoming aware of

see **Organize** page 12

Regional government policy paper on economic exploitation

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo published its policy paper, "Economic Development" a few days ago. This is the third in a series of policy papers which will develop into the Regional Official Plan. This plan, although incomplete, is referred to fondly by its designers as a "people plan"; yet it betrays a callous indifference to the needs of the vast majority of people—working people. "Economic Development" in particular, reveals that the goals of Regional government are identical with the goals of the monopoly capitalist class.

The latest policy paper shows that Regional government has two major aims: (1) greater income for Regional government itself and for the monopoly capitalists it represents, (2) lower expenses for Regional government in the form of services and less money being spent by industry in the form of wages.

A key factor in achieving these twin aims is the hiring of more women workers. Regional government favours the growth of capital intensive industry—industry requiring very few workers. This type of industry generates greater profits for its owners because very little money is spent on wages. "Alternatively such industries may be primarily employers of female labour,"the policy paper states. Women workers offer one great advantage over men workers from a capitalist point of view: They are willing to work for less money than men. According to figures published in the present policy paper, women in the K-W area earned on the average, less than half as much as men in 1971. Until the demand for equal pay for equal work is achieved, industry will prefer to hire women. It is more profitable to do so.

Regional government favours the practice of hiring more women, but for a different reason. The government must provide services to the residents of the area in the form of water, sewage treatment, recreation facilities, etc. The advantage that women workers offer to the Regional government is the fact that they are already here. They are the wives of working men. When women work outside the home, Regional government doesn't have to provide them with more services, which it would have to do for people moving into the area.

It does not even have to build more roads or improve the public transportation system. The policy paper talks about "the unwillingness and undesirability of female labour travelling long distances to work." The truth is that poorly paid workers simply cannot afford to commute long distances to work. Their travelling expenses would only use up their income. Companies which offer extremely low pay must be centrally located.

Women are willing to work at badly paying jobs only when it is necessary for them to contribute to the family income; and local industry fulfills this requirement by offering extremely low pay to men workers. According to a table in the Canada Yearbook, workers in this area receive lower pay than workers in any other city in southern Ontario. Men receive such low pay, that their wives are forced to work at still lower paying jobs in order for the family to survive. This results in greater profits for industry and lower expenses for Regional government.

Clearly, there is a need for a large percentage of women in the Region to work. A husband and wife together can earn only enough to support a small family. And land speculation has made home ownership virtually impossible. "...In the future years we may expect smaller families and more women re-

see **Policy Paper** page 4

Union Gas workers persist in strike struggle

The Union Gas workers, who have been on strike since February 7, 1974, against the Union Gas monopoly company in south-western Ontario, are persisting in their strike struggle. On April 29, negotiations between the two jointly negotiating unions, International Chemical Workers Union (ICWU) and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), and the Union Gas Company, broke down again.

The gas workers are seeking improved working conditions and shorter working hours, as well as higher wages.

The workers are demanding a 37.3 hour work week. The present work week is 40 hours. The 37.3 hour work week has already been won by gas workers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northern Ontario, but the company has so far rejected the just demand of the workers for the same working hours as elsewhere in the gas industry.

The workers also demanded that the company's use of casual employees as cheap labour be discontinued, and that the workers at United Gas in Hamilton, wholly-owned subsidiary of Union Gas, be integrated into a common operation agreement along with the Union Gas workers.

In response to these just demands, the company arrogantly proposed rollbacks on overtime, days of rest, scheduling of hours, notice of schedule changes and elimination of the day-worker classification. In more detail, this is what it means: At present, work schedules, showing days off, lunch periods, days of work and holidays are posted 60 days in advance. The company wants to reduce advance notice on work schedules to 4 weeks. The present contract also provided for 48 hours notice of changing of a shift or payment of a premium of time and a half in event of failure to give notice. The company wants to change this to 24 hours notice. When work is done on days of rest, at present, the worker gets time and a half on the first day, double time on the second. The company wants to reduce this to time and a half for the first 6 hours of the two days and double time for hours over 6, thus reducing the amount of overtime paid.

At present, workers may be classed as day-workers who work from 8:00 to 5:00, Monday to Friday with Saturday and Sunday off, or as shift workers who work any combination of hours for 5 consecutive shifts. There are also relief workers whose use has been kept to a minimum and the company can only use more by agreement with the union. The company wants to eliminate the day-worker concept and reduce all workers to relief shift workers so that they can manipulate an employee's working hours and cut down on overtime paid.

These proposals are totally unac-

Union Gas page5

Policy Paper from page 3

entering the labour force." This is the stated goal of Regional government.

The Regional Plan stands for greater wealth for the capitalist class. What it calls economic development is in reality the development of economic exploitation of the working class to a higher level. It favours the present situation in which women are forced to accept low paying jobs because their husbands do not receive enough pay. Wages paid to men are low because women are forced to do the same work for less money. This curcular problem can be resolved only when the working class as a whole demands equal pay for equal work by women as well as higher wages for all workers.

It is time the working class drew up a policy of its own—to struggle against its own exploitation and against the capitalist system which fosters it.

Radio-Canada journalists and producers refuse to be agents of anti working class propaganda campaign

Journalists and producers at the Montreal section of Radio-Canada and the CBC (the French and English language radio and TV networks operated by the federal government) are waging a determined fight against reactionary management interference in the content of news and political affairs programming. The journalists are also fighting for the right to form a union, and the producers are fighting to force the management to respect their collective agreement.

The conflict broke open on Monday, May 6, when Radio-Canada management arbitrarily fired a journalist for "insubordination" because he refused to obey a management order to interview the president of the United Aircraft Company. The journalist had done a report on the militant struggle of the United Aircraft workers in Longueil. In the course of their strike struggle, the United Aircraft workers have valiantly resisted the most vicious attacks of the UA capitalists, led by company president Stevenson, who have used police, scabs, injunctions, lawsuits, intimidation campaign, terrorism, propaganda campaign in the capitalist press, etc., to try to smash the workers' union and crush their strike struggle. According to the reactionary management of Radio-Canada, the United Aircraft capitalists had the "right of reply" to the report prepared by the journalist. Both the journalist and the producer of the programme in question justly maintained that the "right of reply" did not apply in this case. The producer also pointed out that the management order to the journalist had gone over her head, and that this violated the collective agreement between the Radio Producers' Association of Radio-Canada. The agreement gives management no right to directly determine programme content, but only the right of final veto.

180 Radio-Canada journalists and other employees, member of the Syndicat general du cinema et de la television (affiliated to the Confederation of National Trade Unions), immediately responded to the arbitrary and unjust firing by walking off the job. The walk-out paralysed the entire news and political affairs side of Radio-Canada programming, and forced cancellation of the special budget night broadcast on the French network.

Of the 180 employees who walked out, only 120 have union "accrediattion", i.e. have forced the capitalist class to recognise their union and bargain with them collectively through their union. The other 60 are "free-lance" journalists

see **Radio-Canada** page 6

Union Gas

ceptable to the workers. They will never bargain away the hard-won working conditions which they have obtained through past class struggle. They rightly refuse concessions of their present working conditions, which the company is arrogantly trying to erode.

The economic demands of the workers have not yet been presented by the unions. First, the issue of working conditions must be settled to the workers' satisfaction.

In making its offer, the Union Gas Company plainly shows that its purpose is to beat the unions, and snatch away the hard-won victories that the workers have gained through past struggles. This vicious scheme of the capitalists will never succeed.

The workers are strongly united and determined to continue their strike until they obtain their just demands.

From PCDN

Radio-Canada from page 5

hired on a contractual basis by the corporation. They are fighting to have the jurisdiction of the union extended to cover them. The Radio-Canada capitalists have tried everything they could to prevent this. Their main tactic has been to fire the journalists who are most active in working for their unionisation. Including the journalist who was fired on Monday, who was a union activist, six union militants have recently been fired by Radio-Canada as part of this campaign. In explaining their walkout, the Radio-Canada employees denounced management's anti-union campaign.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 7, less than 24 hours after the walkout began, management was forced to capitulate and reverse its decision to fire the journalist. However, in the official letter confirming that the journalist was rehired, management inserted a sentence which reasserted their "right" to go over the heads of the producers and interfere in programme content, in violation of the collective agreement it had signed with the producers. Following the example of the journalists, the radio producers immediately walked off the job at 4 o'clock Tuesday afternoon and went into an indefinite study session. On Thursday, May 9, television producers joined this walkout and study session. The walkouts have almost completely paralysed the French-language radio and TV network, which has its headquarters in Montreal, and have partially affected the English network (CBC).

The Radio-Canada journalists have an absolute right to organise themselves into the associations of their choice in order to force the capitalists to negotiate with them collectively and sign collective agreements. The Radio producers have an absolute right to insist that the Radio-Canada capitalists respect the collective agreement they have signed. The monopoly capitalist class wants to use the radio and television journalists and producers as the agents of its increasingly vicious anti-working class propaganda in order to prepare public opinion for fascist repression of the working class movement. It is an excellent thing that the journalists and producers are refusing to cooperate, and it is absolutely necessary for them to make full use of their union to carry on this fight and to hold walkouts and do whatever else is necessary to force the capitalists to respect their organisations and meet their just demands. Their militant, tit-for-tat struggle has already forced the capitalists to back down on one important question. By persisting, they are bound to win complete satisfaction of their demands.

From PCDN

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On The Line is produced voluntarily by a staff of workers in the Kitchener area.

Editor—Bill Aird

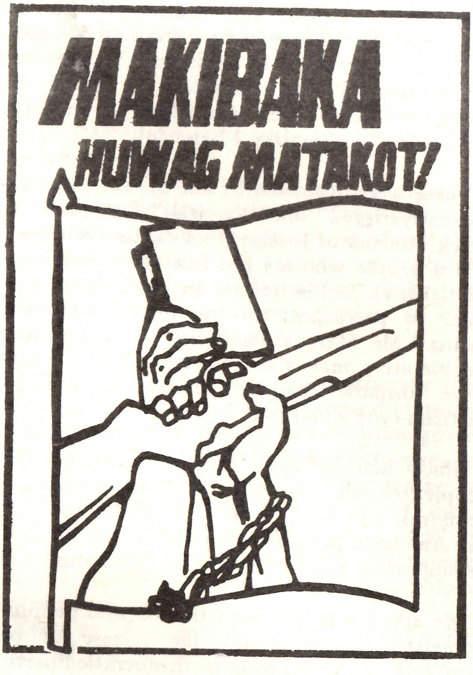
The following is taken from a pamphlet issued by Filipino people resident in the USA which explains the struggle going on against US imperialism in the Philippines.

VICTORY to the PHILIPPINE LIBERATION STRUGGLE!

The history of the Filipino people has been one of unremitting revolutionary struggle against colonial and imperialist domination.

After overthrowing Spanish tyranny in the 1896-98 revolution, the Filipino masses fought the invading U.S. colonizing forces in the Filipino-American War (1899-1914) and, in 1941-44, the Japanese imperialist forces.

Their struggle is continuing . . . .



STRUGGLE! DON'T BE AFRAID!

Basic Historical Facts

From 1900 to the present, the Philippines has been a U.S. colony—the first Asian country victimized by U.S. imperialism. It has served as a rich source of cheap raw materials and labor, an outlet for surplus capital, a dumping ground for manufactured goods. U.S. monopoly capitalists (together with their Japanese and European counterparts, plus a few Filipino landlords and merchants) use every mean possible to maintain the semi-colonial and semi-feuda system in the Philippines.

As a result, 90% of the 40 million Filipinos, mostly peasants and workers, are impoverished. A mere 2.5% of the population—landlords, merchants, bureaucrat-capitalists subservient to U.S. corporations—own 65% of the total wealth.

In this status quo of injustice, U.S. corporations (worth about $3 billion) dominate the strategic economic, political, military and cultural sectors. For every $1 invested, U.S. Big Business exacts a super-profit of $7. More than 20 U.S. military installations, notably Clark Air Force Base (the largest outside USA) and Subic Naval Base (hq. of U.S. 7th Fleet) and 20,000 U.S. troops together with the Pentagon-supervised Marcos army, today safeguard the economic interests of U.S. monopoly capitalists in the Philippines and all of Asia.

Whose Side Are You On?

Countries want independence, nations want liberation, the people want revolution—this is the world-historical trend today. Defeated in IndoChina, U.S. imperialism is in decline. Together with progressive forces all over the world, the Filipinos are advancing against U.S. imperialism and its agents.

Panicked, the U.S. ruling class set up the Marcos dictatorship on Sept. 22, 1972. The dictatorship abolished Congress, curtailed the courts, suppressed the citizens' democratic rights and civil liberties. Workers' strikes, rallies, demonstrations, etc. are outlawed. Marcos' "New Society" boasts of: No freedom of speech or press. No freedom to assemble peacefully. No freedom to redress grievances. The military controls everything. More than 10,000 political prisoners are harassed, tortured, or executed in the concentration camps.

In exchange for U.S. supplies of weapons, high-interest loans, unlimited profits for Exxon, GM, ITT, Pepsi-Cola, Ford, etc., Marcos for more than 8 years now has enriched himself and given the Filipinos: Massive unemployment. Inflation—starvation wages, skyrocketting food prices. Corruption in govt. Terrorism by police and military. Curfew. Midnight raids. Widespread famine. Crime. Violence.

A climate of fear prevails. Anyone can be arrested for "rumor-mongering." For daring to think, speak, act—for freedom, truth and justice, against oppression and exploitation.

The People Fight Back!

Historical experience shows that imperialism and all fascist dictatorships are doomed.

People's war now rages in the Philippines.

The Filipino people have always loved freedom and independence. They will neither surrender to the "law and order" of prisons, nor accept the peace of the graveyard. Right now they are fighting back in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—farmers, workers, students, nationalist businessmen, priests and nuns, Christians and Muslims, etc. In Mindanao the Muslim Revolutionary Forces have crushed over 1/3 of the reactionary army.

All over the islands, the New People's Army led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (guided by Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought) is mightily surging forward. It has liberated vast areas, improved the people's livelihood, wiped out thousands of mercenaries, including at least 25 U.S. "Special Forces" soldiers fresh from Vietnam.

All over the country, the National Democratic Front—a broad coalition of various organizations fighting for national democracy—is mobilizing millions. The brutal and unpopular U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, now in crisis, is on its way out.

The Filipino people are moving forward to the victory of the national democratic revolution!

The present stage of the Philippine revolution "is a national democratic revolution, a revolution seeking the liberation of the Filipino people from foreign and feudal oppression and exploitation . . . . It is a national revolution principally because it seeks to assert national sovereignty against U.S. imperialism and its local running dogs. It is a democratic revolution principally because it seeks to fulfill the peasant struggle for land against domestic feudalism and furthermore it seeks to uphold the democratic rights of the broad masses of the people against fascism."

AMADO GUERRERO
from *Philippine Society and Revolution*

Joint Statement

by

FRIENDS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE (FFP)
KATIPUNAN NG MGA DEMOKRATIKONG PILIPINO (KDP)
MOVEMENT FOR A FREE PHILIPPINES (MFP)
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FILIPINOS IN THE UNITED STATES (NAFUS)
NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE PHILIPPINES (NCRCLP)

Today, December 30, 1973, Ferdinand Marcos' term as President of the Philippines ends under the validly ratified and operative 1935 Philippine Constitution. Filipino groups in the United States opposing the Philippine dictatorship therefore unite in demanding that Mr. Marcos fulfill his contract with the Filipino people and step down from office.

Since the Filipino people have been silenced by a repressive martial law rule, we take this opportunity to voice their desire for the restoration of democratic rights.

Mr. Marcos has abolished the Philippine Congress, manipulated and corrupted the Constitutional Convention, harassed and imprisoned the political opposition, and suppressed the freedom of expression and all civil liberties. In an attempt to legitimize his dictatorship and his usurpation of power beyond December 30, 1973, Mr. Marcos resorted to "plebiscites" on January 17 and July 27.

These were dismissed by the international press as "patently rigged" and "farcical." For, as the former Greek Minister of Justice John Zigdis has aptly put it, "To a people who are not free (such as those under martial law), plebiscites are an insult—it is like asking them to participate in the forging of their own chains." Mr. Marcos' insistence of clinging to power illegitimately makes the situation in the Philippines more unstable than it already is, leading to a Vietnam-type situation.

Since Marcos does not represent the Filipino people, we call upon the U.S. government to stop all economic and military aid to him. We also call upon the American people to oppose the use of their taxes in supporting another illegitimate government in Asia.

We stand together with the Filipino people in the homeland struggling for the release of political prisoners, the restoration of democratic liberties, and the return of human rights.

"The defection of my friend and comrade Victor Corpus to the true people's army has awakened me and many of my fellow officers to the correct and historically proven solution to our country's ills. It is indeed only through armed struggle by the people and their army against the exploiters that the masses can hope for a just and progressive society . . . . I am therefore defecting from the puppet armed forces in order to join the New People's Army."

Lt. CRISPIN S. TAGAMOLILA
March 29, 1971

Appeal for International Support

(Excerpts)

To the freedom-loving peoples of the world:

We come to you in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism to appeal for your political and material support for smashing the most oppressive and hated puppet regime ever to blight the history of our unhappy land, and for establishing a truly free and just society redeemed from foreign and feudal domination . . . .

The revolutionary, democratic and progressive forces participating in this struggle are rallying to carry out the three-fold task of uniting to oppose and overthrow the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship; of liberating the people from U.S. imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism; and of establishing a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation.

It is the aim of the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front to develop and form a broad national united front among all patriotic and democratic forces. In this connection, the commission has put forth the following ten-point programme for revolutionary action as basis for unity:

1. Unite all anti-imperialist and democratic forces in order to overthrow the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship and work for the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation;
2. Expose and oppose U.S. imperialism as the mastermind behind the setting up of the fascist dictatorship, demand the nullification of all unequal treaties and arrangements with this imperialist power, and call for the nationalization of all its properties in the country;
3. Fight for the re-establishment of all the democratic rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief, and the right to due process;
4. Gather all possible political and material support for the armed resistance and the underground against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship;
5. Support a genuine land reform programme that can liberate the peasant masses from feudal and semi-feudal exploitation, and agricultural production through cooperation;
6. Improve the people's livelihood, guarantee the right to work and protect national capital against foreign monopoly capital;
7. Promote a national, scientific and mass culture and combat imperialist, feudal and fascist culture;
8. Support the national minorities, esp. those i Mindanao and the mountain provinces, in thei struggle for self-determination and democracy;
9. Punish after public trial the ringleaders of the U.S.-Marcos fascist gang for their crimes against the people and confiscate all their ill-gotten wealth; and
10. Unite with all peoples fighting imperialism an seek their support for the Philippine revolutionar struggle.

Only by pursuing this programme can the Filipin people bring about national salvation fro centuries-old bondage.

In the name of the broad masses of the Filipin people, including all the Filipino martyrs who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of national freedo

THE PHILIPPINES IN ITS SOUTHEAST ASIAN SETTIN

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and democracy, we appeal to all the peoples of the world for internationalist solidarity with our cause. Condemn the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. Make common cause with us by extending us all possible political, material and moral support.

To the American people, we issue a special appeal: Resolutely oppose the leaders of U.S. imperialism for supporting and abetting the Marcos fascist regime. Stop them from converting our country into another Vietnam.

In turn, we reaffirm our revolutionary solidarity with all peoples against imperialism and all reaction. We pledge our lives to the struggle until the dawning of a new day of freedom and democracy for all.

Yours in revolutionary struggle,

THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

ORGANIZATIONS

Katipunan ng Mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) (Union of Democratic Filipinos) A revolutionary anti-imperialist mass organization supporting the Filipino struggle, KDP publishes *Ang Katipunan* (bi-weekly), P.O. Box 23644, Oakland, California 94623

National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP) A nationwide organization working for four main demands: an end to martial law, immediate restoration of all civil liberties, release of all political prisoners, an end to all U.S. military, economic and technical aid to the Marcos dictatorship.

Friends of the Filipino People (FFP) A broad-based coalition which demands an end to all U.S. military and political intervention in the Philippines and supports the democratic struggle of the Filipinos for independence and freedom.
Office: 235 E. 49th St., New York.

PUBLICATIONS

Ang Katipunan (see above)

Philippine Information Bulletin, Box 409, West Somerville, Mass. 02144

Pahayag, P.O. Box 11087, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Tambuli (monthly newsletter of the Chicago NCRCLP), 2546 N. Halsted St., Chicago, Ill. 60614

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The value of labour

The capitalist economic system is by far the most pervasive machine for the exploitation of one class by another ever seen. It is necessary to clearly understand how it works before any intelligent approach can be made to destroy it, and its destruction is imperative if there is ever to be peaceful cooperative relations among men for the purpose of appropriating from nature the means of sustenance.

Karl Marx was by far the most astute student of capitalist economics. His penetrating scientific analysis, **Das Capital**, first published in 1867, remains the best work on the subject to date. There are three volumes, for the analysis of a very complex structure requires a great deal of work and ingenuity. Just as "The machinations of the devil knows no bounds", so must the effort be to defeat him.

The following article is intended to be the first of a series on the subject of capitalist economics as explained by Karl Marx, who is loosely quoted and paraphrased in order to present the material in a form suitable for short articles.

CAPITAL - by Karl Marx

The Nature of Commodities, Part I

The capitalist mode of production is characterized by the proliferation of a great quantity of commodities; that is, articles produced specifically for commercial trade or exchange. Almost everything in a capitalist society has to be bought with money.

Commodities have two main economic aspects: First, they have utility or use-value which is a property of the product inherent in itself. The use-value of a commodity is due to its physical properties. For example, the use-value of a knife is its ability to cut and is due to its hard metallic blade which can be sharpened, the handle for holding it, etc. Use value makes up the substance of all wealth.

Secondly, commodities, in relation to each other, have exchange value or trading value. Exchange value is not inherent in the isolated commodity but arises only when a comparison is made between commodities. Exchange value has nothing to do with the physical properties or any other aspect of an isolated commodity, including use-value. Exchange value is exemplified by a quantitative relationship such as: 5 marbles equal 1 apple. Comparison implies some property common to both and this common property is called value.

In considering commodities in relation to each other, that is, apart from their use value, the only thing left that they have in common is that **they are products of labour**. Therefore, value is measured by the quantity of labour contained in the article: labour of average skill and intensity under the normal conditions of production prevalent at the time—socially necessary labour. Value then is proportional to the amount of socially necessary work to produce the article. When labour becomes more productive, value decreases and vice versa.

Labour also has a two-fold aspect which corresponds to use-value and exchange value of commodities: specific useful labour (work) which produces use-value and generalized homogeneous undifferentiated labour which produces value. Work is measured in units of manpower-hours, days, weeks, etc. It is analogous to the concept of energy in physics.

The value of a commodity is not apparent in its physical form, it has a purely social reality, acquired because it is an embodiment of human labour.

The simplest value-relation is that between two different kinds of commodities:

x commodity A equals y commodity B.

see **Marx** page 12

Marx from page 11

Commodity B serves as the standard by which Commodity A is measured. However, A and B do not have the same function. A cannot be the commodity whose value is measured and the standard by which it is measured at the same time. Similarly, B cannot be the value standard and its measured value at the same time. In the previous equation Marx calls Commodity A the relative value form and B the equivalent value form.

The magnitude of two different objects can be compared quantitatively only in the same units. In the expression, 1 yard equals 3 feet, both quantities in the expression are in units of length, and are therefore commensurable. If we say 10 yards of linen equal 1 coat, it is implied that the unit common to both is value. It is the value of the linen which is measured relative to coats which serves as the equivalent standard. The value of one commodity is expressed as the use-value of another.

The magnitude of two different objects can be compared quantitatively only in dependently of its value form by the work necessary for its production. A commodity in its equivalent form is not an expression of value. It figures only as a definite quantity of some article. The factor of work cancels out and is obscured, and no quantitative determination of its value is expressed. This result is most convenient for the capitalist who must acquire some portion of the product's value in order to perpetuate his kind. He thus attempts to hide the real nature of his business, which is the confiscation of the products of labour.

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the need to set aside differences in order to unite with other trade unionists in the practical work of organizing.

This is an extremely favourable situation for the working class as a whole. It is a trend which will overcome incorrect lines among organized workers on the question of organizing the unorganized and it is a trend which can lead to a new and higher level of unity in the whole trade union movement.

The main incorrect line, which is promoted by reactionary trade union "leaders" and opportunists who present themselves as progressive is to oppose practical agreements among militants on any basis. All kinds of "reasons" are given for this line but the basic thing it boils down to is opposition, in the practical sense, to the principle of unity in the trade union movement. This line supports disunity in the trade union movement or disunity now and unity later (much later). Unity, **now**, among militants on the practical work of organizing the unorganized will thoroughly discredit and defeat this incorrect line.

Practical agreements among trade unionists which results in actually carrying out specific work will provide a solid basis to solve the problems which have, in the past, given rise to narrow sectional allegiance and inter-union vivalry. This will build new unity at a higher level in the trade union movement.

Readers are encouraged to present their views and experiences on this question or any other question they consider of importance to the working class.

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Federal government steps up its offensive against the working class movement

The federal government has stepped up its attacks and its repression against the working class in general and against its own employees in particular. On Friday, May 3, Postmaster-General Andre Ouellet, and the President of the Treasury Board, Charles Drury, launched into attacks and threats against the right of the workers to strike and have undertaken an agitational campaign to justify repressive measures against workers who do not conform to the wishes of the bourgeoisie and its government. During a meeting in Winnipeg to announce the issue of a stamp commemorating the centenary of that city, Mr. Ouellet said that as for workers who are fighting to renegotiate their collective agreements and who use their right to strike as a weapon in this struggle, "there is a growing feeling that maybe these employees shouldn't have the right to strike". Mr. Ouellet means that all workers who launch strike struggles without the permission of the bourgeoisie should lose their right to strike. At the same time, Mr. Drury stated to journalists in Ottawa that in the future, the government would take reprisals against the strikers: "In the past, we have tended to forgive offences committed during strikes in the interest of concluding the conflict", and "unions in the past have tended to believe that they could engage in illegal acts without fear of retaliation...this will no longer be the case, since the policy of generosity by the government has not paid." The President of the Treasury Board added that in the future, the government would refuse to negotiate any union demand that retaliatory measures be dropped as a condition of return to work.

The federal government has always followed an anti-labour policy. The present liberal government, in particular, has gained notoriety for its numerous anti-labour laws, against the longshoremen, against the railway workers, against immigrants, unemployed workers, etc. But because of the defeat it suffered during the last postal workers' strike, the government finds itself obliged to promise its masters, the monopoly capitalists and foreign imperialists, to take all necessary measures to prevent such a thing from recurring. The government finds itself obliged to intensify its anti-labour policy.

For two years now, the policy of the government has been clearly revealed by its attitude towards the postal workers. For two years, it has systematically refused to consider the just demands of the postal workers. It has always arrogantly upheld its "right" to introduce technological changes for its own gain, to reduce the wages of the postal workers and take away their jobs. In addition, it has resorted to extremely vicious repressive measures against workers who protest against this. On April 7, seven trade union militants were suspended for participating in a campaign to boycott the postal code, and more than 100 were suspended for protesting against these suspensions. When the arrogance of the government forced the postal workers to launch a strike, the government refused even to listen to what the workers had to say and fell back on even more ferocious threats. The Postmaster-General refused to look at his own role in this strike and bellowed that the strike was "illegal" and that as a result he had the right to turn a deaf ear to the just demands of the postal workers. On April 20, he stated that he

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would ask the Minister of Justice to bring legal action against the union and its members, and he threatened to use Parliament to order the postal workers to return to work.

Jean Marchand, the Minister of Transport, also participated in this anti-labour campaign by threatening to introduce legislation in Parliament to break the strike of the St. Lawrence River pilots, as well as the strikes of the air traffic controllers and the federal airport firemen. Instead of putting pressure on the Treasury Board to meet the just demands of the airport workers, he organised scabs to break their strikes.

These anti-labour attacks have reached a higher level. On the one hand, the Postmaster-General is openly threatening to simply suppress the right to strike of workers who use this right without the permission of the capitalist class, i.e. who wage "illegal" strikes. Rather than seeing that it is the government, with its anti-labour policy, which is forcing the workers to hold illegal strikes, the Postmaster-General wants to declare all strikes illegal. On the other hand, Mr. Drury is saying that not only will the government continue to refuse to negotiate with workers who go on strike to re-negotiate ther collective agreements, but it will take measures to police these workers, and these measures will be irrevocable. He also announced that this new policy was already being applied and that all the suspensions and lawsuits against the postal workers which were brought down during the strike will be carried right through to the full extent of their consequences, despite the April 26 agreement which stipulated that all these measures would be dropped.

This new offensive of the federal government against the working class can only give rise to still greater resistance by the working class and further isolate the government. The right to strike is an absolute right of the working class, and no legislation of the bourgeoisie against this right can stop the resistance of the workers to capitalist exploitation and wage slavery.

From PCDN

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"illegal strike" from the capitalists. They know that their struggle for a cost-of-living increase is part of a whole upsurge in the trade union movement where workers all across the country are demanding that their collective agreements be re-opened and they be given a wage increase to offset the effects of inflation. One worker pointed out that the price of food for his family has gone up from $30 a week to more than $50 a week in the past year. Another said that MTD is selling a lawnmower for $80 this year which only cost $50 last year. The workers have every right to demand that their collective agreements be renegotiated when it serves their interests to do so. The capitalists think nothing of breaking the letter and the spirit of the contract when it is in their interest. For instance, the capitalist class is responsible for the skyrocketting inflation and as the $30 increase in the price of a lawnmower shows, the MTD capitalists are as busy reaping the benefits of inflation as any other monopoly capitalist. This is direct interference with the conditions under which the collective agreement was signed. However, according to the law of the capitalists, the workers are supposed to accept this massive deterioration in their wages without doing anything "illegal" to fight back. This means that the capitalist class, which controls the courts and the government, wants the workers to **do nothing** to oppose the deterioration of their wages.

It is clear from the actions of the MTD capitalists prior to the wildcat strike by the workers, that they were trying to cover up the fact that they are breaking the contract they signed with the workers in every way. They offered to give the workers a raise of 22 cents in June which

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was due, according to the contract in September. This raise was not to be in addition to the September increase but in place of it. The workers correctly saw that this was nothing but a crumb which wouldn't even meet their present economic needs but would also create a problem next September when they got no raise while inflation kept on skyrocketing. They also correctly saw that this was a delaying tactic of the MTD capitalists to get over the heavy spring production and weaken the position of the workers by forcing them to fight next fall at a time when production is quite slow at MTD. The workers strongly rejected these crumbs being offered by the MTD capitalists and walked out on a wildcat strike to back their demands for a decent cost-of-living increase in their wages.

The strike struggle of the MTD workers as well as the struggle of the postal workers, hospital workers and others have brought to the fore the question of the significance of collective agreements. In particular, the workers' fundamental right to re-open their collective agreements whenever it serves their interest to do so. All the current strike struggles clearly show that the working class has no intention of abiding by the arbitrary wishes of the bourgeoisie. The working class is becoming increasingly aware that the right to strike cannot be legislated by any law other than that determined by the interests of the working class.

The workers sign a collective agreement with the capitalists in order to limit the super-exploitation of ther labour by the monopoly capitalist class. In its insatiable greed for profits, the bourgeoisie's main aim is to pay the workers the lowest possible wages, make them work under the worst conditions and give them no job security. When the workers have the right to bargain collectively, the capitalists are forced not to lower the wages of the workers and not to cause their working conditions to deteriorate, while the workers agree to sell their labour power to the capitalists so long as the capitalist abides by the terms of the contract. In practice however, as soon as it is in their interest to do so, the capitalists violate the spirit and letter of the collective agreements.

It is as a result of the present spiralling inflation and corresponding lowering of the workers' real wages, that the three largest labour federations in Quebec have called for the re-opening of all collective agreements to update the wage clauses and to include clauses indexing wages to the cost-of-living. It is the fundamental right of the workers to re-open their collective agreements in order to negotiate new clauses consistent with their interests. It does not matter how much the bourgeoisie howls that it is "illegal" to do so because when the bourgeoisie howls, it is a sure sign that the workers have the monopoly capitalists in a bargaining position. On one hand, the workers must oppose all the attempts of the monopoly capitalist class to violate the collective agreements. At the same time, it is the fundamental right of the working class to re-open their collective agreements. The workers at MTD have every right to strike in support of their demands for a decent cost-of-living increase in their wages.

United Aircraft workers

On Wednesday, April 17, the Quebec Superior Court imposed a $20,000 fine on the 2,600 production workers of United Aircraft and their trade union, after it found the union guilty of "contempt of court". The "contempt of court" charge was laid by the United Aircraft Company because on March 11, 12, 13 and 14, the workers militantly opposed four successive attacks by the provincial police and the company scabs against their picket lines.

The United Aircraft workers have defied the arbitrary court injunctions several times, and this fine can only encourage the workers to persist in their just struggle.

St. Mary's workers set new trend of unity

On Tuesday, May 28 the workers at St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener held a one-day sympathy strike in support of their fellow workers at Woodstock General Hospital. This is an excellent example of the growing unity and solidarity among hospital workers. It is also a clear sign of the developing class consciousness of the hospital workers who are beginning to see the fact that a strike against the capitalist hospital administrators in Woodstock can be supported by a strike against the capitalist hospital administrators in Kitchener.

The sympathy strike of St. Mary's workers marks a trend which has not been seen in Kitchener before. This is the trend for workers in one area to support workers in another area by active resistance. This trend has been developing for some time. For instance, many trade union militants are of the opinion that the vicious Dare strike of 1972-73 would not have been lost if other organized workers in the city had supported the Dare workers with active resistance in the form of a one-day sympathy strike.

It is also notable and worthy of praise that the union leadership of Local 220, Building and Service Workers, which represents the St. Mary's workers, were in the leadership of the sympathy strike as well as the actual strike of the Woodstock Hospital workers. While the capitalist hospital administrators were crying "illegal strike" the union leadership made it clear that they were willing to go to jail to defend the workers' rights.

The Portuguese empire is not far from the grave

On Thursday, April 25, at 5:00 a.m. the government of Portugal was overthrown by a coup d'etat led by senior army officers who until recently were members of the ruling clique. A seven-man "junta of national salvation" led by General Antonio de Spinola was formed.

Spinola was a high ranking member of the old fascist regime. Why did he turn against it? He concluded from his long experience of bitter defeats in trying to stamp out national liberation movements that military suppression alone cannot maintain Portugese colonialist rule and that the burden of the colonial wars was ruining the country economically. Before coming to power, Spinola advocated a "political" solution: fake "reforms" including the establishment of a so-called "federation" in which Portugal and its colonies would be equal "members". This is simply a trick. The French tried the same trick in Indochina and later in Algeria. It did not work then; it is not working now.

Just last week, Spinola had to "clarify" his proposals. "Federation" he announced does not preclude complete independence.

General Spinola can twist and turn all he wants to, but he cannot restore Portugese rule in Africa. The Portugese government could not defeat the national liberation movements of Mozambique, Angola or Guinea (Bissau) in ten years of war. Spinola and his regime cannot win now with words.

The Portugese empire in africa has been dying for a long time now. Soon it will be buried.